

Standards of Accreditation Chapter 55
Recommended Changes for Consideration ARM 10.55.601-606
October 12-13, 2011 (February Documents with January Edits)

OK for Now	Needs Work	10.55.601 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: PROCEDURES
X		(1) The Board of Public Education adopts standards of accreditation upon the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
X		(2) The board and the Office of Public Instruction establish procedures and schedules for reviewing the accreditation status of each school.
X		(3) To ensure continuous education improvement, the school district shall develop, implement, and evaluate, a continuous school improvement plan. This plan shall be reviewed on a yearly basis to reflect a continuous improvement process.
X		(a) This plan shall include:
X		(i) a school district level education profile as described in guidance provided periodically by the Office of Public Instruction;
X		(ii) the school district's educational goals in accordance with ARM 10.55.701;
X		(iii) a description of planned progress toward implementing all content and program area standards, in accordance with the schedule in ARM 10.55.603;
X		(iv) a description of strategies for assessing student progress toward meeting all content standards, in accordance with ARM 10.55.603; and
X		(v) a professional development component, in accordance with ARM 10.55.714.
X		(b) the district trustees shall file their adopted continuous school improvement plan with the Office of Public Instruction and make their plan available to employees and the public
X		(c) The Office of Public Instruction shall develop and implement procedures, in consultation with accredited school districts, necessary to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each school and district continuous school improvement plan.

X		(4) To ensure continuous educational improvement, and to meet the identified needs of students in every school, every school in the district shall develop and have on file in the district office a continuous school improvement plan.
X		(5) To ensure continuous educational improvement, the Office of Public Instruction shall provide guidance, resources, and evaluation to assist in the implementation of district and school plans to improve teaching and learning for all students.
X		(6) A school district shall align its curriculum to the state content standards and program area standards as adopted by the Board of Public Education. A school district shall maintain programs to align with the state's schedule for revising standards.
OK for Now	Needs Work	10.55.602 DEFINITIONS For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms apply:
	X	(1) <u>"Accreditation" means the placement of a school into a specific status based on an evaluation of the operations of the institution requiring compliance with certain predetermined minimum standards.</u>
	X	(2) <u>"At-risk student" means any student who is affected by environmental conditions that negatively impact the student's educational performance or threaten a student's likelihood of promotion or graduation. 20-1-101</u> (4) <u>MCA</u>
X		(3) "Assessment" means the gathering, organizing, analyzing and evaluating information about student learning in order to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the instructional program.
X		(4) "Asynchronous" means not occurring at the same time. "Asynchronous" refers to content, instruction, and communication between participants (e.g., students and teachers) that occurs at different times, the period of which may vary by circumstance, (e.g., e-mail, threaded discussions, homework, electronic message boards, online learning opportunities).
X		(5) "Licensure" means certification of an educator/specialist, as issued by the state of Montana, based on completion of an approved educator preparation program. Licensure indicates grade level(s), endorsement(s), and classification.
	X	(6) "Combined elementary-high school district" means an elementary district and a high school district, which are combined for district administration purposes, including districts designated as "K-12 districts" pursuant to 20-6-701, MCA. Most town school districts in Montana would fit this category, i.e., Helena, Hamilton, Whitehall.
X		(7) "Content standard" means what all students should know, understand and be able to do in a specific content area, such as reading, mathematics, or social studies.

X		(8) "Deviation" means a citation of non-compliance with any given standard.
X		(9) "Distance learning" means instruction in which students and teachers are separated by time and/or location with synchronous or asynchronous content, instruction, and communication between student and teacher. This instruction may consist of learning opportunities provided through online (Internet based) and other emerging technologies, videoconferencing, streaming video and correspondence methods.
X		(10) "Endorsement" means an official indication on a license of the subject area(s) and/or specialized program area(s) for which the holder of the license is authorized to practice in Montana accredited schools.
X		(11) "Independent elementary school district" means a district organized for the purpose of providing public education for all or any combination of grades kindergarten through 8.
	X	(12) <u>"Innovative Practices" mean educational strategies and methods founded in scientifically based research ensuring the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.</u>
X		(13) "Internship" means an agreement with a fully licensed (Class 1, 2, or 3) educator, the school district, and a Board of Public Education approved educator preparation program offering the endorsement area. Internships may be offered in the areas of teaching endorsements, as defined in ARM 10.57.412, principals, superintendents, and school counselors. Internships shall be no longer than three school years with no extensions; and yearly progress shall be reported to the OPI by the school district and the approved educator preparation program between 10/1 and 11/15. The Intern shall be considered appropriately assigned if enrolled in a Board of Public Education approved internship program in the State of Montana.
	X	(14) <u>"Intensive Assistance" means a required process for schools in continuous or serious deficiency accreditation status. Such schools have failed to develop or implement an approved corrective plan to remedy deviations within the designated timeline.</u>
X		(15) "Learning progression" means the specific performance expectations in each content area at each grade level from kindergarten through grade 12. These K-12 grade-specific standards define end-of-year expectations and a cumulative progression designed to enable students to meet college and career readiness expectations no later than the end of high school.

	X	(16) <u>"Part-time" means less than half-time enrollment.</u>
X		(17) "Principal" means a person who holds a valid Montana class 3 educator license with an applicable principal endorsement and who is employed by a district as a principal, or who is enrolled in a Board of Public Education approved principal internship program under ARM 10.55.703.
X		(18) "Program area standards" means the subject matter Montana school districts are required to offer and the strategies and proven practices used to instruct. The program area standards include English language arts, arts, health enhancement, mathematics, science, social studies, career and vocational/technical education, technology, workplace competencies, library media, world languages and school counseling.
X		(19) "Program delivery standards" means the conditions and practices school districts are required to provide ensuring that every student is afforded educational opportunities to learn, develop, and demonstrate achievement in content standards and content specific grade-level learning progressions.
X		(20) "Online learning" means education activity in which instruction and content are delivered primarily via the Internet and through emerging technologies. Online learning is a form of distance learning.
X		(21) "School administrator" means a person who is a part of the school's administrative or supervisory staff and who holds a class 3 license and is appropriately endorsed, or who is enrolled in a Board of Public Education approved administrator internship program under ARM 10.55.702 through 10.55.705.
X		(22) "Synchronous" means occurring at the same time. "Synchronous" refers to content, instruction, and communication between participants (e.g., students and teachers) that occurs at the same time even though they may be in different physical locations. For example, instruction in which students and teachers are online at the same time so that a question can be immediately answered (e.g., telephone calls, face-to-face meetings, physical classrooms, chat rooms, and videoconferencing).
X		(23) "Superintendent" means a person who holds a valid Montana class 3 educator license with an applicable superintendent's endorsement and who is employed by a district as a district superintendent, or who is enrolled in a Board of Public Education approved superintendent internship program under ARM 10.55.702.
	X	(24) <u>"Teacher" means a person who holds a valid Montana educator license and who is employed by a district as a member of its instructional, supervisory, or administrative staff.</u> MCA 20-1-101 (26).

X		(25) "Technology delivered learning" means instruction and content delivered via digital technologies (e.g., online, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, or learning experiences that involve primarily the use of computers).
OK for Now	Needs Work	10.55.603 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT
X		(1) Local school districts shall incorporate all content standards into their curriculum, implementing the appropriate learning progression for each grade level. School districts shall assess the progress of all students toward achieving content standards and content specific grade-level learning progressions in each program area. Assessment of all students shall be used to examine the educational program and measure its effectiveness based on the content standards and content specific grade-level learning progressions.
X		(a) The examination of program effectiveness using assessment results shall be supplemented with information about graduates and other students no longer in attendance.
X		(b) The information obtained shall be considered in curriculum and assessment development.
X		(2) For content standards in all program areas in accordance with ARM 10.55.602(8), school districts shall:
X		(a) establish curriculum and assessment development processes as a cooperative effort of personnel licensed and endorsed in the program area, and trustees, administrators, other teachers, students, specialists, parents, community and, when appropriate, tribal representatives and state resource people;
X		(b) review curricula at intervals not exceeding five years and, modify, as needed, to meet educational goals of continuous school improvement plan in accordance with ARM 10.55.601;
X		(c) at least every five years, review materials and resources necessary for implementation of the curriculum and assessment that are consistent with the goals of the continuous school improvement plan; and
X		(d) review curricula to ensure the inclusion of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians.
X		(3) School district assessment plans shall be included in the continuous school improvement plan.
X		(a) School districts shall use effective and appropriate multiple measures and methods to assess student progress in achieving content standards and appropriate content specific grade-level learning progressions in all program areas.
X		(b) Utilizing input from representatives of accredited schools, the Office of Public Instruction shall develop criteria and procedures for the selection of effective and appropriate multiple measures and methods to be used to assess student progress in achieving content and appropriate content specific grade-level learning progressions in all program areas.

X		(c) The Office of Public Instruction shall provide technical assistance to districts to meet the criteria and procedures in (3)(b).
X		(d) Not later than the school year immediately following the completion of written sequential curricula aligned with the content standards in a program area in accordance with ARM 10.55.601(6), the school district shall begin the development of a student assessment process for that program area. The assessment process must be in place two years following the development of written curriculum.
X		(e) The measures used to report to the Office of Public Instruction shall be included within the district assessment plan in accordance with ARM 10.55.601.
OK for Now	Needs Work	10.55.604 Variance to Standards <u>through Innovative Practices</u>
	X	(1) A school district may apply to the Board of Public Education through the Superintendent of Public Instruction to implement <u>an alternative to a standard or a section of standards, excluding practices that reflect innovation, flexibility, accountability and ensure quality education for all. This excludes standards stating statutory criteria, standards pertaining to teacher licensure or endorsement, and content and performance standards. as defined by the Board of Public Education and provided in guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.</u>
	X	(a) In its application, the school district shall provide evidence <u>establishing that its alternative proposed variant innovative practice is workable and educationally sound in comparison to meet or exceed the intent of the standard(s) that would be waived, and shall establish that the goals of the alternative will meet or exceed the results under the current standard(s).</u>
	X	(b) In its application, the school district shall <u>establish submit a statement of mission goals and measurable objectives, and identify formative and summative measures to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the alternative proposed variant innovative practice.</u>
	X	(c) Upon appropriate application, the Board of Public Education shall approve or deny the proposed <u>alternative variant innovative practice.</u>
	X	(d) If the board denies the proposed <u>alternative variant innovative practice, a written response shall be provided to the district by it shall state in writing the Office of Public Instruction why it has done so.</u>
	X	(e) If the board approves the proposed <u>alternative variant innovative practice, its the initial approval shall be for two five years. The district must reapply at the end of the five years cycle.</u>

	X	(f) During <u>each of the five years through the annual data collection</u> , a district shall report the status of the <u>innovative practice to the second year of the initial approval</u> , the Board of Public Education, through the Office of Public Instruction. shall direct an on-site evaluation of the alternative.
	X	(g) <u>Based on the annual review the OPI may recommend renewal of the district's variant innovative practice to the Board of Public Education</u> If the board finds the alternative is workable and educationally sound in comparison to how the waived standard(s), previously worked in the district, the board shall renew the alternative for five years.
	X	(h) <u>At the discretion of the OPI, yearly on-site evaluations may be conducted, and based on the review, the OPI may recommend to the BPE approval or disapproval of the variant innovative practice.</u> Subject to on-site evaluations every five years, the board may continue to renew the alternative.
	X	(i) A school district may discontinue an approved alternative <u>variant innovative practice</u> at any time. If it does so, it shall promptly notify the Board of Public Education in writing <u>through the Superintendent of Public Instruction.</u>
	X	(2) A school district may apply to the Board of Public Education through the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create a charter school.
	X	(a) A charter school must provide an education that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Montana Constitution, state law, and school accreditation standards.
	X	(b) The Board of Public Education may only grant charters to publicly funded schools or programs under the supervision and control of a locally elected board of trustees in an existing school district.
	X	(c) The procedure by which a school district may apply to create a charter school and by which the Board of Public Education may approve, deny, evaluate, and renew a charter school shall be identical to that outlined in ARM 10.55.604.
	X	(d) To be proposed by a school district and approved by the Board of Public Education, a charter school shall, at a minimum, guarantee the following:
	X	(i) school district governance and control;
	X	(ii) unrestricted, open student access;
	X	(iii) compliance with all health and safety laws;
	X	(iv) teacher licensure and endorsement to the same extent as required or provided by state law or accreditation standards;

	X	(v) employee collective bargaining to the same extent as required or provided by state law; and
	X	(vi) a plan for consideration of input by community members and staff as to formation and implementation issues. Consideration of input may be identified by formation of advisory committees involving staff and/or community members, conduct of a properly noticed public meeting for purposes of comment on the formation or operation of the charter school, or any other reasonable means that result in an opportunity for input by staff and community members prior to a decision of significant interest to the public regarding the formation or operation of the charter school.
	X	(e) A school district may discontinue an approved charter school at any time. If it does so, it shall promptly notify the Board of Public Education in writing.
OK for Now	Needs Work	10.55.605 CATEGORIES OF ACCREDITATION
	X	(1) Regular accreditation means the school has:
	X	(a) aligned its program aligned to the <u>state content and performance standards</u> , <u>content specific grade-level learning progressions</u> , and program area standards;
	X	(b) certified licensed staff that is appropriately <u>endorsed</u> and assigned; and fully utilized ;
	X	(c) <u>adequate</u> school programs and resources that are adequate ;
	X	(d) facilities that meet appropriate <u>safety and health</u> standards; and
	X	(e) school <u>local board of trustees</u> , staff, parents, <u>families, guardians</u> , and community that work together to provide a quality education.
	X	(2) When the school meets the Regular accreditation standards with minor deviations, these deviations are noted on the annual accreditation status letter as minor citations means the school does not meet some of the standards, when considering the school program in its entirety. <u>These deviations are noted on the annual accreditation status letter.</u>
	X	(3) Accreditation with advice means the school exhibits serious and/or numerous deviations from the standards. The school must submit <u>to the Office of Public Instruction an explanation of the deviations and targeted solutions</u> improvement plan developed by trustees and administrators, teachers, parents, and the community to the Office of Public Instruction.

	X	(4) Deficiency accreditation with assistance means that the school has been on advice status for at least two years and continues to have serious and/or numerous deviations, or has substantially increased the seriousness of deviations over the previous year.
	X	(a) A school will be accredited with deficiency <u>status</u> if:
	X	(i) the school employs as a teacher an individual who does not have a Montana teaching certificate <u>license</u> .
	X	(ii) the school has a facility that creates an unhealthy environment with safety and health hazards; or
	X	(iii) the school provides an inadequate learning environment.
	X	(b) The school administrator and the chair of the board of trustees will <u>shall</u> submit <u>to the Office of Public Instruction</u> and/or come before the Board of Public Education with an improvement a <u>corrective plan</u> , and a systematic procedure, <u>and timeline for correcting</u> <u>resolving</u> the deviations noted. The Office of Public Instruction will facilitate assistance to enable the school to accomplish the goals of the improvement plan and to correct the deviations.
	X	(c) <u>Schools failing to respond with an approved corrective plan, or to complete the plan within the designated timeframe to resolve such continuous or serious deficiency accreditation status shall be placed into the required Intensive Assistance process.</u>
	X	(i) <u>Intensive assistance procedures are established by the Office of Public Instruction and reviewed by the Board of Public Education.</u>
	X	(ii) <u>The OPI facilitates and monitors the intensive assistance process to providing support to the school to implement accomplish the goals of the improvement corrective plan and to correct resolve the deviations within the designated timeline.</u>
	X	(iii) <u>Schools shall remain in intensive assistance until the corrective plan is fully implemented within the designated timeline.</u>
	X	(5) Non-accredited status means that a school on deficiency status fails to <u>meet the requirements of Intensive Assistance remaining nonresponsive and is out of compliance with the Board of Public Education standards of accreditation.</u> document that it has met its improvement plan.

	X	(6) A school seeking initial accreditation or reinstatement of accreditation shall meet the requirements of regular accreditation outlined in (1). This process shall include an on-site review from the Office of Public Instruction.
OK for Now	Needs Work	10.55.606 PERFORMANCE BASED ACCREDITATION (RE-WRITE ENTIRE SECTION)
	X	(1) Performance-based accreditation gives a school district the option of obtaining, for one or more of its schools, accreditation through a process that involves self-evaluation, peer-review and on-site visitations. This method allows a school to meet accreditation standards by showing through its students' work that it provides a quality education. The school improvement plan serves as a basis for assessment of school effectiveness and an impetus for mobilizing improvement efforts.
	X	(2) After engaging in a sustained school improvement effort, a school district, on behalf of one or more of its schools, may apply to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for performance-based accreditation. The Board of Public Education makes the final decision on whether a school is accredited through the performance-based accreditation process. The school improvement process shall incorporate the following six steps or their equivalent:
	X	(a) development of a student/community profile;
	X	(b) development of a school mission and goals that reflect a locally derived philosophy of education;
	X	(c) identification of desired learner results based on the content and performance standards;
	X	(d) analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness;
	X	(e) development and implementation of a school improvement plan; and
	X	(f) monitoring through self-assessment and visits by peers or teams
	X	(3) To be granted performance-based accreditation, a school must
	X	(a) engage in a continuous schoolwide improvement process;

	X	(b) host at least two visitations, chaired by a person trained or experienced in the process to seek feedback and validate the school improvement process;
	X	(c) notify the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the visitation dates and team members. A member of the staff of the Office of Public Instruction shall be invited to be a member of the visitation team;
	X	(d) submit reports of the visitation to the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and
	X	(e) apply to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for performance-based accreditation by providing documentation of school improvement, including, but not limited to:
	X	(i) visitation reports;
	X	(ii) a school improvement plan;
	X	(iii) evidence of attainment or significant progress toward attainment of the school improvement plan goals; and
	X	(iv) a recommendation from the visitation team that the Board of Public Education grant performance-based accreditation.
	X	(4) After a review in which the school demonstrates successful attainment or significant progress toward achieving the desired learner results, the school may be granted performance-based accreditation for up to six years. The school is subject to peer or team reviews at least every three years. The review shall establish that:
	X	(a) the integrity of the school improvement process is maintained;
	X	(b) the school is making informed, data-driven decisions;
	X	(c) the process is school-based;
	X	(d) all steps of the school improvement process are connected and inform one another;
	X	(e) committees work collaboratively within and among one another;

	X	(f) the school implements each step appropriately; and
	X	(g) student learning is central to the entire process, with improvement demonstrated in desired learner results, based on content and performance standards.
	X	(5) A school district, on behalf of one or more of its accredited schools electing this process, may petition the Superintendent of Public Instruction to recommend that the Board of Public Education waive existing standards that interfere with the school improvement plan, excluding standards stating a statutory requirement, standards pertaining to teacher certification and content and performance standards as defined by the Board of Public Education.

